on electronic hardware used for educational purposes before the National Literacy Mission. No such request, however, is pending with the Central Government.

Gold Smuggling

1711. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the "unabated gold smuggling" into India is mostly financed by the parallel foreign exchange market;

(b) how much gold is estimated to be illegally brought into our country annually;

(c) whether Government propose to permit the Non-Resident Indians to import gold in order to help attract funds into the country;

(d) whether the levy of 20 per cent import duty will increase revenue to the Government and help in the fall of price of gold in India: and

(e) if the answer to part (c) and (d) above be in the affirmative what are the reasons for not agreeing to it by the Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) No specific reports are available with the Government to indicate the existence of any parallel foreign exchange market for financing smuggling of contraband gold into India.

(b) Smuggling being a clandestine activity, it is not feasible to estimate the quantum of gold being smuggled into the country annually.

(c) Rangarajan Committee which examined this issue has not favoured import of gold by N.R.I.'s.

(d) and (e) In view of (c) above, (d) & (e) do not arise.

Dowry Deaths

@1712. SHRI SHAMIM HASHMI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether dowry deaths are on the increase in the country and if so, the reasons thereof and the corrective steps taken/proposed to be taken;

(b) what was the State-wise and year-wise, position of such deaths in the country for the last three years; and

(c) whether any scientific studies have been conducted regarding dowry deaths and if so, the results thereof and the action taken/proposed to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) A statement showing State-wise and Union territory-wise the number of cases reported as 'dowry deaths' during the years 1985, 1986 and 1987 is enclosed. (*See* below).

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, has been amended in 1984 and 1986 to make the law more stringent. The Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 have also been amended to deal effectively not only with such cases but also with cases of cruelty to married women.

(c) No scientific study of dowry deaths has been conducted on an all India basis. However, in 1986 the Bureau of Police Research and Development conducted a study of unnatural deaths of married women with special reference to dowry deaths in the Union Territory of Delhi.

@Previously Unstarred Question 1080, transferred from the 18th November, 1988.